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FOR WHA/CEN - R.BEAL, L  
PASS JUSTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PREL CJAN ASEC BH  
SUBJECT: BELIZE: OUTSTANDING EXTRADITION REQUESTS

¶1. Charge and Poloff called July 10 on Attorney General Sedi Elrington to discuss outstanding extradition requests for Mark and Gary Seawell and Rhett Fuller. We sought assurances that the recent change over of the Solicitor General would not add additional delay to the cases.

¶2. Elrington said that the cases would proceed as scheduled and that he would personally follow them to ensure that they received correct handling. The next Seawell hearing is set for the end of July. He told us that Fuller (whose case goes back nearly a decade) was scheduled to receive a decision from the Court of Appeal at its next session in October.

¶3. Elrington placed the blame for the slow pace of the extraditions on the judiciary, saying that judges had no pressure on them to produce timely decisions. Complaints about delays were coming from both the public and the bar, and the government was considering how to improve the situation. Elrington said he favored legislation to make judicial salaries payable only on completion of timely decisions.

¶4. Separately, Charge and RSO met with National Security Minister Carlos Perdomo July 8 and raised the Seawell extradition case among other issues. While the judicial aspect of Mark's hearing was not in Perdomo's mandate, we noted that the hunt for Gary seemed to have died out and his trail had gone cold. We urged a renewed effort by the police to arrest Gary so that he could face extradition proceedings.

HILL